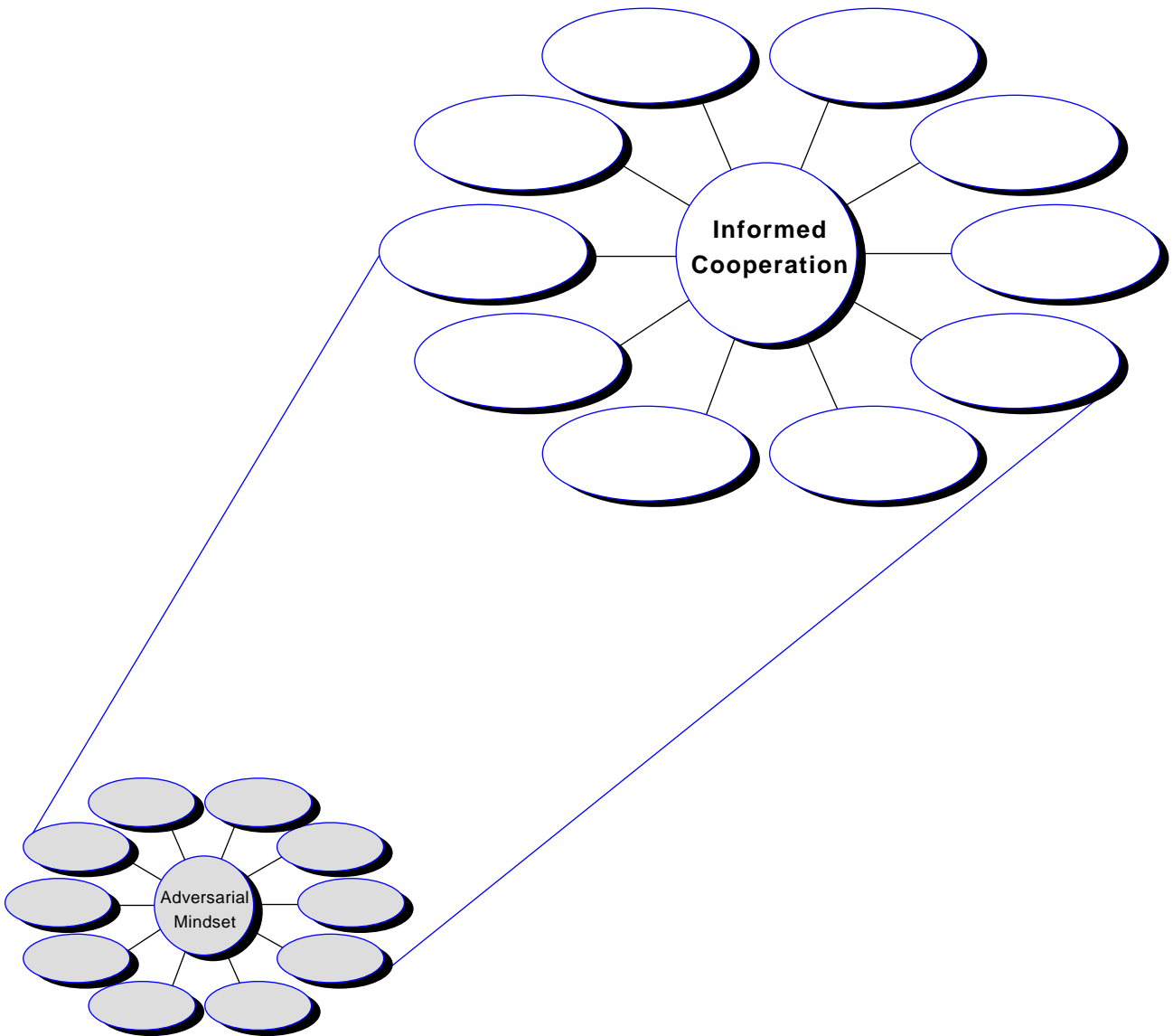


TEAM-BUILDING WORKBOOK



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Preparing people & organizations for continuous change



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FOREWORD

This handbook is intended to:

- raise your awareness of what you already know and challenge your thinking about teams and teamwork
- provide you with personal insights into how to improve your team skills
- give you and your teammates a common language to talk about teamwork and a way to continuously improve team performance
- help you organize your thinking and perceptions so that you can participate effectively in a team-building meeting

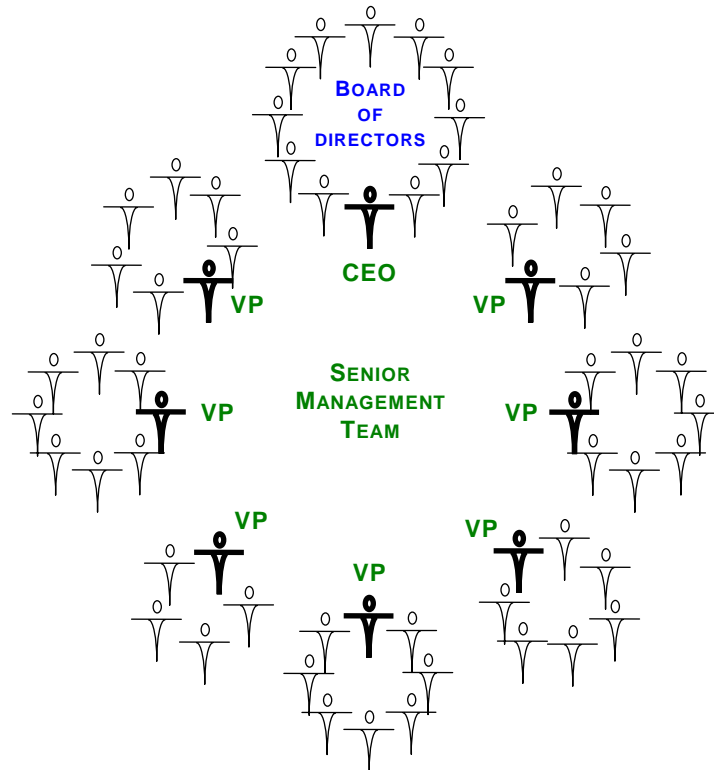
HOW TO MAXIMIZE THIS EXPERIENCE

You already possess a lot of personal perspective on teamwork. You've participated in many teams in many different settings, and you've observed many teams at work and at play. Space has been provided so that you can interact with the text as you read it. You will gain the most out of this experience if you highlight passages that have special relevance to you and make notes freely—especially recording the connections you make to your past team experiences and to your current team involvement.

A team is a group of people who need to cooperate in order to accomplish a common goal. The specific form of cooperation needed varies a great deal, depending on the demands of the task. Every team is unique. No team ever arrives at perfection.

No matter what the current level of functioning of this team, you have the opportunity to work with your fellow associates to improve it. It may not always be comfortable. You may need to talk directly about topics everyone has been avoiding. There may be disagreements as to what is keeping the team from being more effective.

This is all part of the process of getting clarity about what's happening, what's important and figuring out how to improve performance. If you participate fully and honestly, the chances are very high you'll emerge feeling good about yourself and the contribution you made to team improvement.



INTRODUCTION

There's hardly anything more fun and exhilarating than being part of a winning team—especially when you achieve results that nobody thought were possible. There's a bone-deep satisfaction in knowing that you did your part, others did theirs, and together you accomplished something none of you could have done alone.

It's also true that there's probably nothing more frustrating than being part of a team that doesn't live up to its potential. You know you can do better. The team has the individual talent it needs, but you don't manage to get your collective act together.

Team-building is a systematic way to produce more winning experiences at work.

Connections / Observations / Questions



THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF TEAMS

Teams have always played an important role in organizational life, but major forces of change in the workplace are elevating their importance still higher. Before we begin to explore the internal workings of this team, let's take a look at some of the external forces of change affecting all teams.

GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

The global marketplace has introduced a level of competition that requires excellent teamwork *throughout* the organization. In the past, geographical distance and the slow dissemination of information provided a barrier to potential competitors from other parts of the world. Information technology has changed that forever. There is every reason to expect that the level of competition will continue to intensify, creating still more pressure to perform—especially to manage and reduce costs.

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Doing more with less is almost a common corporate mantra today as most organizations have been forced to downsize as one way to reduce costs and remain competitive. *Doing more with less* is clearly possible and desirable in most organizations, but not without effective teamwork and not without empowered associates.

TRANSITION TO THE INFORMATION ERA

The transition from the industrial to the information era has changed what's possible and what's required of teams. Advances in information technology make it feasible for team members to share large amounts of information very quickly from any location in the world. This effectively eliminates some previous barriers to teamwork such as geographical distance, and at the same time, it brings with it new challenges such as choosing the most important information to communicate and the best channel to use.

RISING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Rising customer expectations are placing new demands on teams. Customers rightfully expect that whoever they are dealing with at the moment is empowered to solve their problem, or at the very least, knows who to call to get it

Connections / Observations / Questions



handled. There is no greater turnoff to a customer or a potential customer than the old “that’s-not-my-job” attitude.

USE OF TEMPORARY TEAMS

Most organizations have been and still are structured around more or less permanent teams, but the use of special, temporary teams to address specific, short-term issues has become commonplace in large organizations. These temporary teams take many forms, but four of the most common are:

- Task forces that are charged with solving specific, urgent problems, after which team members return to their previous jobs.
- Project teams that are assembled to develop a new product or build a new plant, after which a new team comes in to manage what they began.
- Quality improvement teams that are formed to correct specific defects or improve specific processes on certain products.
- Business process reengineering teams that are charged with making fundamental changes in the way the organization conducts its business.

The life span of a temporary team may be as brief as a week or as long as several years. The time commitment can range from a few hours a month to full-time. Team composition may be homogeneous or heterogeneous, depending on the nature of the task. Many of these special teams offer exciting challenges with a lot of organizational visibility, and team members are often allowed to bend organizational rules to meet deadlines and overcome obstacles. It’s commonplace for special team members to voluntarily work long hours because they get caught up in a clear-cut challenge to solve an important problem. Participation in such a team is often the highlight of one’s career.

The transition to a temporary team and back to a permanent one can be a disruptive experience for the individual and the organization if sufficient attention is not paid to the process. Special teams often develop great loyalty and cohesiveness. This is desirable up to a point, but it’s a problem when it becomes difficult for new members to join the team and difficult for existing team members to

Connections / Observations / Questions



return to their old functional group or to find a new home base.

A second downside is the resentment felt by other organizational members who observe the special teams bending the rules while they are required to live within the normal organizational constraints. Care must be taken to position the work of special teams in the overall context such that everyone sees their use as an integral part of the organizational process in achieving key results, and participation must be open to all.

SIMULTANEOUS MEMBERSHIP ON MORE THAN ONE TEAM

Membership on more than one team at a time has become the rule rather than the exception for most organizational members. Every manager has always been a member of at least two teams—their boss's and their own group of subordinates, but the proliferation of special teams has created the problems of simultaneous membership on more than one team for large numbers of organizational members in addition to managers.

Every team makes demands on its members in terms of their time and use of resources. It would be an extremely rare circumstance in which multiple team membership didn't cause some conflicts between competing demands. Team leaders are usually focused on their responsibilities in achieving team results and may not be very sensitive to the other commitments that most team members have in their other roles. As the significance of one's roles on multiple teams increases, the frequency and severity of conflicts inevitably increases as well.

Simply attending meetings on more than one team usually produces time conflicts, but juggling two or more sets of priorities is where the real problems arise. A single team member who is careless about making commitments can have a significant negative impact on several teams at the same time. It doesn't have to involve serious broken promises. Coming late and unprepared to meetings can be disruptive and demotivating to other team members.

Fundamental teamwork skills are just as important as they ever were, but two additional skills are now equally vital: the ability to join and leave teams gracefully and the ability to sustain an overall perspective (a systems view) no matter what one's current team memberships may be.

Connections / Observations / Questions



PACE OF CHANGE

The sheer pace of change requires a higher level of teamwork in today's rapidly moving marketplace. Everything tends to happen faster, and very few things stay the same for long. This calls for more frequent communications among team members to stay abreast of what's happening and to stay ahead of the competition.

The history of change in your industry is not a good predictor of the future. No one knows where their next competitor will come from and how they will serve customers. The only thing you can be relatively sure of is that someone you are unaware of is studying how to capture your customers right now.

TIME-BASED COMPETITIVENESS

Let's give the lawyers their due on this one—time *is* of the essence. The supplier who can deliver quality products and services *faster* and with *flexibility* to meet the customer's needs and timetable is the one who will win the business.

Becoming a truly time-based competitor requires a level of teamwork and a style of management not present in many corporations today. It requires leaders who understand the systems view and work relentlessly to achieve the best fit between the technical and social systems that are interwoven in every organization. It requires that everyone have access to relevant information, that resources be used efficiently and that there be a constant focus on the elimination of waste. Finally, and perhaps most important, it requires that everyone engage in continuous improvement.

FOCUS ON PROCESSES

Most American organizations are still organized around principles of mass production and are run by a command and control style of management. To embrace time-based competitiveness, we must break down walls between functional groups, we must open for examination every process used in the business, and we must empower those who are adding value to make changes as they discover ways to eliminate waste and improve the processes.

In short, we must be willing to start over—to throw out all our cherished ways of doing things and invent new, better ways. Many of the greatest leaps in improvement will

Connections / Observations / Questions



be found at the interface of processes previously viewed as independent.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

Self-managed, cross-functional teams are a key strategy in improving processes and eliminating time required to produce and deliver products and services. By giving such teams responsibility for a whole process, we create the possibility of dramatic improvement, but we also create the need for learning and deep organizational change.

Each team member will need to know more and will need to assume more responsibility than in the past. Team members will have access to more information and control of more resources than ever before. Many managers who grew up in the old command and control philosophy will have great difficulty making the transition to this new way of operating.

Being a member of a self-managed, cross-functional team will be more interesting and more challenging. Everyone will be required to think—and generally, to assume full responsibility for the success of their team. A high trust level within the team and with all stakeholders is an essential requirement for success.

PRESSURE TO PERFORM

The net result of all of these forces of change is a heightened pressure to perform—on the organization as a whole and on every team in the organization. To improve performance, we must learn from our experience and apply what we learn as quickly as possible. Tomorrow's organizations will have no place for individuals and teams that aren't learning and improving continuously.

The implications for the life of teams and what it means to be a team member are profound.

Since teams are central to organizational performance, the productivity improvements that can be achieved by improving team effectiveness are staggering.

What other external forces of change are having an impact on teams in your organization and your industry?

Connections / Observations / Questions

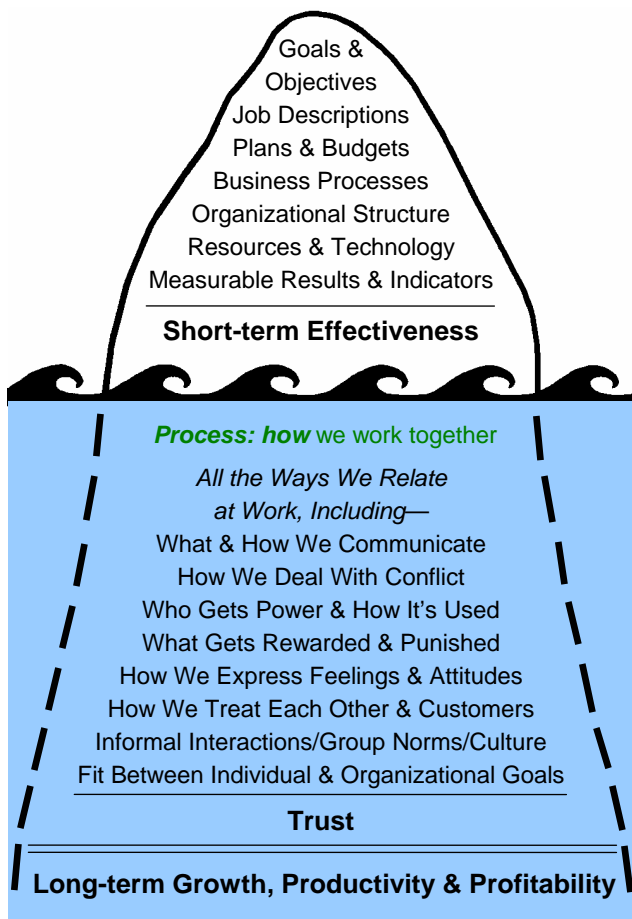


TEAM EFFECTIVENESS IS A FUNCTION OF CONTENT AND PROCESS EXPERTISE.

Every group or team has a task to perform which can usually be described in specific *content* terms. Every team also uses some common *processes* to accomplish their task. The “organizational iceberg” provides a graphic representation of typical *content* and *process* issues at work. Of course, reality is never quite this clearly organized.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL ICEBERG

Content: what we work on



A typical agenda for a staff meeting is a listing of the *content* issues the team plans to work on. Rarely do *process* issues get a formal place on the agenda, but rest assured, *process* makes a difference in every meeting. Not surprisingly, most teams devote as much as 95% of their attention and discussion to *content*, which leaves 5% or less to examine the *process* of their work.

Connections / Observations / Questions



There are several reasons for this uneven attention. *Content* issues can usually be measured objectively and have a clear, direct relationship to the group's goals. *Process* issues, in contrast, are subjective and personal in nature. Most team members have had formal training about *content*, but not *process*.

Some teams never get around to openly discussing the impact of the group's *process* on their effectiveness. They are all aware at some level of its importance, but they haven't developed the interpersonal skills and/or enough trust to work on *process* as another way to improve team performance.

Trust is a singularly important *process* issue in groups. Without trust, team members will not say what needs to be said to one another. But even if we can agree that trust is the "bottom line" of group *process*, how much trust do we need to be effective in achieving our goals?

Team effectiveness is a function of all the factors in the iceberg, not just the readily apparent ones above the surface.

It follows that team development requires paying attention to both *content* and *process*. In essence, every team member needs to be a participant-observer in every team meeting—actively working on *content* issues while paying attention to *process* as well.

To ignore *process* is to run the risk of building up a lot of stuff beneath the surface that can get in the way of team effectiveness. Talking about *process* issues directly is a way of bringing them to the surface where their effects can be understood and dealt with openly.

Connections / Observations / Questions



PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

Unfortunately, what passes for *teamwork* in many organizations would best be called *pseudo-teamwork* because it's not the real thing. The truth is, most teams waste a lot of time and energy because members compete with each other instead of cooperating.

The hallmark of pseudo-teamwork is an adversarial climate or mindset.

Here are some things that cause and sustain adversarial mindsets.

PSEUDO-TEAMWORK



When team members lack necessary skills and resources, they are starting at a disadvantage. When they aren't clear about common goals and how their respective roles are intended to fit in the overall scheme of things, they are unable to plan and act strategically toward the organizational mission. Faced with an ambiguous situation, they will attempt to establish a role for themselves that allows them to feel they're making a contribution. This inevitably leads to self-serving communication—not because people are inherently selfish, but because they want to be productive.

The problem is, their way of defining things may not coincide with what others need from them and what others think their role should be. They often withhold information needed by others, sometimes in an effort to protect the niche they're carving out, and at other times, simply because they aren't aware of who needs to know what.



This typically leads to a lot of win-lose conflict and endless power struggles. Differences of perceptions, opinions and preferences are to be expected in every work setting, but the assumption that in every such instance there must be a winner and a loser does great harm to relationships and the ability of people to listen and collaborate effectively.

In this kind of organizational climate there are more losers than winners, and unfortunately, many of the losers adopt a survival mentality. They withdraw from the competitive struggle to initiate change or to move up in the organization and focus energy on personal survival. They do what's necessary to create the appearance of being productive, but careful observation will show that their participation is half-hearted and defensive.

Those who succeed in gaining power usually create norms which others see as restrictive and make policies which others see as double standards. They end up building walls around their turf and using a lot of energy to protect it from the rest of the organization. They often become masters at playing organizational politics.

Not surprisingly, the trust level is low to nonexistent in organizations where pseudo-teamwork is the norm. People are typically unable to see the negative effects of their actions on their fellow team members and others throughout the organization. Or if they see the negative effects, they often continue their way of behaving, believing "that's the way life is in organizations." To a large degree they are correct in this last belief, but it doesn't have to be that way.

There is a better way...

Connections / Observations / Questions